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SEIU'S Henry: Acquisition of T-Mobile USA by AT&T is Good News for Consumers, Workers and U.S. Economy

Following the announcement that AT&T will acquire T-Mobile USA, Mary Kay Henry, the International President of the Service Employees International Union, issued the following statement:

"This merger is a win-win for American families. Now, thousands of workers in the telecommunications industry will have the opportunity to collectively bargain and insist that good, quality jobs stay in our communities. And with a stronger voice on the job, workers can ensure that they deliver the best service to consumers.

"As America's working families continue to struggle, we must meet this moment with innovative solutions to expand opportunity and rebuild America. Access to high-speed internet access continues to define access to educational opportunities, economic development, job training, healthcare and government services, making the telecom industry a critical part of this effort. AT&T's commitment to expanding high-speed broadband access to 95% of Americans is the sort innovative solutions our economy demands."

Background on Benefits of Merger:

- First, the merger will expand access to high-speed wireless Internet to 95% of the population. T-Mobile had no plans to bring 4G LTE wireless to its 34 million customers. AT&T has made a commitment to expand 4G LTE service to an additional 46.5 million and reach 95% of the U.S. population.
- Second, the merger could have a positive impact on prices. Wireless prices declined 33% from 1999-2011 despite significant mergers. Even after this merger there will still be many competitors in individual markets. Furthermore, the Federal Communications Commission and the Department of Justice will likely require AT&T to sell all or part of its assets in specific markets where it is determined to have too much market power.
- Third, the merger will improve conditions on the job for thousands of T-Mobile workers, thereby improving service quality for consumers. In general, better workplace relations positively impact product quality. This merger will improve workplace relations for employees of T-Mobile by giving their 20,000+ non-management workers a voice in the workplace. AT&T—the only union wireless company—stays neutral and allows workers to make their own decisions about whether or not to join a union. T-Mobile actively intervenes in this process through such practices as requiring workers to attend anti-union meetings, pressuring workers to report on any union contacts, and taking photos of workers accepting union literature. After the merger, T-Mobile's workers will be able to make their own decision without fear or management interference.

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With 2.2 million members in Canada, the United States and Puerto Rico, SEIU is the fastest-growing union in the Americas. Focused on uniting workers in healthcare, public services and property services, SEIU members are winning better wages, healthcare and more secure jobs for our communities, while uniting their strength with their counterparts around the world to help ensure that workers—not just corporations and CEOs—benefit from today's global economy.